

FROM ANIMAL CRUELTY TO SERIAL MURDER:
APPLYING THE GRADUATION HYPOTHESIS

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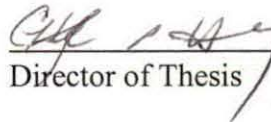
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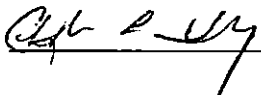
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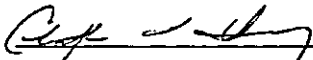

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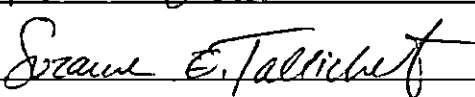
While serial murder has been recorded for several centuries, limited academic attention has been given to this important topic. In addition, scant research exists which delves into the childhood characteristics of serial murderers. Studies exist that present supporting evidence for a link between childhood animal cruelty and adult aggression toward others. Under the framework of social learning theory, the graduation hypothesis presents an explanation for the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder.

For the purpose of this study, five serial murderers were selected for case study analysis. The first objective of the study was to determine if these killers qualified as a serial murderer using Egger's (1998) definition. The second objective was to determine whether a possible link existed between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder using the graduation hypothesis. The analysis revealed that all five cases qualified as serial murderers under Egger's definition. In addition, each of the

cases revealed support for a possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder. This finding lent support for the graduation hypothesis. Although limited research has explored childhood animal cruelty and serial murder, it is evident from this study that it is an important topic for future research.

Accepted by:


_____, Chair




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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of serial murder in the United States has drawn much attention over the past twenty years from academicians, criminal investigators, and the media. However, serial murder is by no means a new criminal sensation. Documented cases date back to the 1800s. Herman Webster Mudgett (a.k.a. Henry Howard Holmes) is considered by many scholars to be the first serial murderer in the United States. During the late 1880s, Mudgett killed twenty-seven women in Chicago before being caught and hung in 1896 (Wilson and Seaman, 1990). Since Mudgett, hundreds of serial murderers have been apprehended in the United States alone (Hickey, 1997; Egger, 1998).

A new sense of urgency began to emerge across the country in the 1960s as cases of serial murder became publicized. The idea of one individual murdering numerous people sent shock waves throughout the country. The first reaction of the general public and the media was that these murderers must be crazy (Lunde, 1976; Dietz, 1986). This mad killer ideology was embraced by the media and put into print as well as played out in television and films. The age of publicized serial murder had begun in the United States.

While some feel that serial murder is a fascinating occurrence that cannot universally be explained, others seek to find answers to why someone kills numerous people with no apparent motive. However, extensive efforts have been made in developing typologies based on the motives for serial homicide. These motivations

include: sexual gratification, thrill seeking, visual or auditory hallucinations, power/control, and enrichment of life (Holmes, 1983; Schreiber, 1984; Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Fox and Levin, 1999).

While attention has been paid to the motivations of serial murderers, little has been given to contributing factors which influence their aggression. In 1961, MacDonald developed a triad of childhood characteristics that could possibly indicate future aggression and even homicidal behavior in an individual. These indicators include persistent bed-wetting past the age of five, obsession with fire, and cruelty to animals. Even though the MacDonald triad has been discussed and debated for decades, limited research has been conducted on its usefulness in explaining aggressive behavior (Hellman and Blackman, 1966; Wax and Haddox, 1974; Geddes, 1977).

While the triad as a whole has not been adequately tested, individual characteristics have received some academic attention. For example, studies have been completed linking childhood animal cruelty to aggressive behavior in adulthood (Mead, 1964; Tapia, 1971; Rigdon and Tapia, 1977; Kellert and Felthous, 1985; Tingle, Bernard, Robbins, Newman and Hutchinson, 1986). One year following the American Psychiatric Association's addition of animal cruelty to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-III R* (American Psychiatric Association, 1987), a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) study revealed that animal cruelty was a possible early warning sign of serial murder (Ressler, Burgess, and Douglas, 1988). However, the suggested connection of animal cruelty to serial murder has been under-examined in research. Very few studies have been completed investigating whether

serial murderers are in fact cruel to animals prior to their murders (Humane Society of the United States, The, 2001; Ressler et al., 1988). While there is limited empirical support for the link between animal cruelty and serial murder, more theoretical support exists.

One theory that offers a possible explanation for the link between animal cruelty and serial murder is social learning theory. Under social learning theory, serial murderers learn violent and aggressive behavior that may eventually lead to murder. When addressing the link between animal cruelty and serial murder within the framework of social learning, it has been suggested that aggression escalates from violence against animals to violence against humans. This "graduation hypothesis" suggests that children who abuse animals may eventually graduate to violence against humans (Arluke, Levin, Luke and Ascione, 1999; Ascione and Lockwood, 2001). Research indicates that childhood animal abusers are at an increased risk of committing violent behavior toward humans in their adulthood (Ascione, 1992; Ascione, 1993; Arluke and Lockwood, 1997; Arluke et al., 1999). With respect to the previous research and its focus on animal cruelty and aggression, the purpose of this study is to explore the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder by applying social learning theory, specifically using the graduation hypothesis.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SERIAL MURDER LITERATURE

Defining Serial Murder

Although there have been documented cases of serial murderers throughout history, the terminology used in describing these killers has changed in recent decades. One of the first attempts at academically addressing serial murder was by Rheinhardt in 1962. Rheinhardt referred to those who killed numerous victims over a period of time as “chain killers” (Newton, 1990). In the years following Rheinhardt’s description of serial murderers, the number of motiveless killings rose dramatically. According to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), motiveless murders made up only 8.5 percent of all violent crimes in 1976, but rose to 17.1 percent in 1981. By 1986, motiveless murders had risen to 22.5 percent of all violent crimes (Ressler et al., 1988). This increase in reporting has encouraged researchers to further investigate these motiveless murders.

Over twenty years after Rheinhardt’s initial terminology, researchers and investigators began to refer to serial murder as lust murder (Egger, 1998). This term was used because many thought that the violent motiveless acts of murder were committed for no other reason than lust. Geberth (1981) considered one who killed through sexual assault, often engaging in severe sexual mutilation of the body, a lust murderer. The actual term serial murder is believed to have been coined in the early 1980s by FBI Special Agent Robert Ressler (Schechter and Everitt, 1996).

The creation of a new term and detection of a new type of murder encouraged the FBI to seek funding for the investigation of serial murder in 1984 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1984a; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1984b; Ninety-Eighth Congress, 1984). As a result of the newly discovered need for further investigation into serial murders, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) was developed in 1985. The new program was designed for the FBI to assist local police agencies in investigating and solving serial murder cases (Egger, 1998). VICAP provided up-to-date computer equipment that kept track of violent murder patterns (Hickey, 1997). The intense focus on serial murderers had begun.

At that time, the FBI considered an individual who murdered at least three victims while cooling-off between each act of murder a serial murderer (Gerberth and Turco, 1996). Building on this information, later definitions have tended to be much more comprehensive and exclusive of what constituted serial murder. In 1988, Brooks, Devine, Green, Hart, and Moore presented another definition of a serial murderer. Under this definition, a killer is considered a serial murderer when there are:

a series of two or more murders, committed as separate events, usually, but not always, by one offender acting alone. The crimes may occur over a period of time ranging from hours to years. Quite often the motive is psychological, and the offender's behavior and the

physical evidence observed at the crime scenes will reflect sadistic, sexual overtones (p. vii).

Holmes and DeBurger (1988), to further differentiate serial murder from traditional forms of homicide, presented an additional five components. First, the murders must be repetitious. The murderer kills again and again over a span of months or even years until apprehended. Second, the murders are typically committed by one individual against another. Serial murderers rarely target victims that are with other people and typically do not team up with other killers. Third, victims of the murder normally do not have a prior relationship with the killer. Serial murderers do not usually victimize individuals with whom they are strongly associated. Fourth, there is an uncontrollable desire to kill. The murders are generally not the result of emotion or from the hasty selection of a victim. Finally, serial murderers are not motivated to kill for monetary purposes. Most serial murders occur for reasons other than economic gain. Serial murderers seem to function under instinctive motivations which usually appear irrational to others. Every aspect of the murderers personalities and behaviors are governed by their internal motives.

Hickey (1997) presented a much more inclusive and less specific definition of a serial murderer. According to Hickey, all offenders that kill a minimum of three to four victims over a period of time should be considered serial murderers. The killings generally display a pattern of types of victims, methods, and/or motives connecting each successive murder. Those individuals who repeatedly kill in the confines of their own homes are to be included. For example, individuals who kill numerous husbands,

wives, children, and/or elderly people for financial gain through insurance are considered serial murderers. Hickey points out that either men or women who kill within the boundaries of a city, state, or travel across boundaries to kill their victims are considered serial murderers. In conflict with other definitions, Hickey deliberately points out that there may be a personal relationship between the killer and the victim. The serial murderers' motive may be either pleasure or material gain.

Egger re-evaluated the definition of serial murder in 1998. According to Egger, there are six major components that generally define a serial murderer. To begin with, the perpetrator or perpetrators must commit a murder followed by an ensuing murder. Second, the perpetrator(s) and the victim typically have no relationship prior to the murder. Third, time must elapse between the murders, with no association between one murder and the previous murder. Fourth, the separate murders generally occur at different physical locations. Fifth, the murder is motivated by dominance and power of victims, not for material gain. Finally, victims may be chosen due to a certain symbolic value (i.e., homeless, prostitutes, single women, homosexuals). Many victims of serial murder are considered weak and vulnerable which in turn leads to their victimization. Due to the restrictive nature of Egger's definition, numerous multiple murderers are not considered serial murderers, including black widows (women who kill family members for money), blue beards (men who kill family members for money), angel of death/mercy killers (doctors and/or medical personnel who kill patients), and those who kill solely for economic gain.

Typologies of Serial Murder

In the early stages of serial murder research, little was known about the killers themselves, including personal characteristics and motives. In 1983, Holmes distinguished the mysopod as one type of serial murderer (See Appendix A for a complete list of serial murder typologies). This type of murderer intertwines victimizing children, sometimes fatally, with sexual gratification. It is important to note that these offenders begin their victimizing as pedophiles and then progress to more violent acts of torture, mutilation, and murder.

On the heels of Holmes' description, Schreiber (1984) presented the psychotic killer. This term incorporates those killers who lose touch with reality. Psychotic killers often claim to hear voices that encourage them to kill. These individuals are considered mentally ill. Although many may claim to be mentally unstable at the time of the murders, few serial murderers are considered psychotic (Hickey, 1997).

In 1986, Dietz added to the foundation laid by Holmes (1983) and Schreiber (1984). According to Dietz (1986), every serial murderer has a mental disorder, while little to none are psychotic. Dietz stated, "Psychotic offenders rarely have the wherewithal repeatedly to escape apprehension" (p. 483). Dietz (1986) also developed five categories of serial murderers. The first category is the psychopathic sexual sadists. These killers incorporate a sexual aspect to their killings. They often suffer from antisocial personality disorder and sexual sadism. Sexually sadistic individuals receive enjoyment from inflicting pain on others through sexual means. According to Dietz, almost all serial murderers are psychopathic sexual sadists. The

next category is crime spree killers. These are murders that occur within a short time period as compared to traditional serial murderers. Crime spree murders are motivated by money and excitement. The third type of killer is functionaries of organized criminal operations. This category includes gang-related murderers and paid hitmen. These individuals kill within the framework of a larger organized criminal operation. The fourth category is custodial poisoners and asphyxiators. These murderers include physicians and nurses that kill their patients who are generally children or those incapable of caring for themselves. The final category is a subset of Schreiber's psychopathic killers, the "supposed" psychotics. These are individuals who claim to hear voices that tell them to kill.

Holmes and DeBurger (1988) developed a classification system of four types of serial murderers based on their motivations. The first type is the visionary serial murderer. These serial murderers are either god-mandated or demon-mandated. God-mandated serial murderers report killing their victims in response to a voice or vision from god. Demon-mandated serial murderers claim that a demon tells them to kill their victims. Those considered to be visionary serial murderers are generally out of touch with reality and suffer from psychosis.

The second type of serial murderer is the mission-oriented type. These serial murderers feel that it is their mission in life to completely eliminate certain groups of individuals from the world. Generally, these killers use their own personal values in determining who they kill. For example, they may feel that it is their religious

responsibility to rid the world of all homosexuals, prostitutes, or different racial/ethnic groups.

The third type of serial murderer is the hedonistic type. These serial murderers are in search of pleasure. In attaining pleasure, these murderers show no sign of remorse or conscience for the act itself. According to Holmes and DeBurger (1988), three subcategories exist under the main category of hedonistic serial murderers. The first subcategory is thrill seekers. These killers receive pleasure from the actual act of murder itself. The overall search for "highs" and excitement by thrill seeking murderers outweigh any sympathy or remorse of actually killing another person. These offenders usually spend more time on the process of murder, rather than simply committing a swift act.

The second subcategory of hedonistic serial murderers is creature comforts. These serial murderers kill as a method of enriching their lives. The power they possess over another individual adds comfort to their lives. The majority of these killers kill their victims quickly, because the fulfillment comes from the act of power itself. The third subcategory of hedonistic serial murderers is lust murderers. Hedonistic-lust serial murderers are those who kill for sexual gratification. They have a greater likelihood of mutilating the body after death and participating in post-mortem sex (necrophilia) and experimentation. Lust murderers display an obvious sexual component in relation to their killings.

The fourth and final type of serial murderer is the power/control oriented type. Power/control serial murderers do not kill for sexual gratification. Their "arousal"

comes from the power and control itself. The power that the killers have over their victims is what drives them to kill and kill again. Many of the identified power/control serial murderers get enjoyment out of watching their victims cry, scream, and beg for their lives. The domination that the killers exhibit is the fundamental root of their pleasure.

Although Holmes and DeBurger's (1988) typology is extensive, the categories are not necessarily exclusive. Fox and Levin (1999) adapted the previous typology to be more selective. The updated typology has three categories with two subcategories each. The first type of serial murderers are thrill-motivated killers. There are two subtypes of thrill-motivated killers, dominance and sexual sadism. As the title suggests, dominance thrill killers receive gratification from dominating their victims through power and control, while sexual sadist killers are sexually motivated in their efforts to achieve satisfaction.

The next category is the mission-oriented killer. These murderers kill to assist a cause. They are reformist mission-oriented killers and visionary mission-oriented killers. The reformists kill to better the world by eliminating "evil" including homosexuals and prostitutes. Visionary killers claim to have visions that order them to kill. Most visionary killers are considered psychotic and are captured earlier than other types of serial murderers.

The final category is the expedience-motivated killers. These killers include protection-oriented killers and profit-oriented killers. Protection-oriented killers murder to protect themselves from detection, such as killing a witness to another crime

they have committed. Profit-oriented killers murder in order to profit, such as perpetrators of insurance scams or black widows.

Because competing definitions and motives sometimes cloud the importance of the topic, Egger's (1998) definition of serial murder will be used in this study. But, while various types and categories of serial murderers help officials to identify the perpetrators, they do not benefit authorities in detecting them before they become killers. Over the past few decades, research has been conducted that attempts to detect early warning signs of future serial murderers. A triad of childhood characteristics has been presented as early warning signs of future serial murderers. These characteristics include chronic bed-wetting past the age of five, fire-setting, and cruelty to animals.

MacDonald Triad

It has been suggested that a triad of behaviors in childhood could possibly be an indicator of later aggression toward humans. This triad of childhood characteristics was first suggested in 1961 by MacDonald. The first indicator is chronic bed-wetting (enuresis) after the age of five. It is important to point out that some children have medical problems which may lead to wetting the bed past this age. Therefore, those children are excluded. However, bed-wetting that continues past the age of five is a cause for concern. This behavior exemplifies a greater pathology of the characteristic. For example, a study by the FBI revealed that sixty-eight percent of twenty-two incarcerated serial murderers admitted to wetting the bed during their childhood. Of

those who wet the bed, twelve continued to do so throughout adolescence (Ressler et al., 1988).

The second behavior of the triad is an obsession with fire. Children who set fires enjoy watching objects burn. The obsession with fire eventually grows to setting structural fires (i.e., houses, barns, or abandoned buildings). However, the motivation for arson is not always visual gratification. Many individuals obsessed with fire are pyromaniacs (Holmes, 1991).

According to Holmes (1991), pyromania "is a pathological condition characterized by a compulsive factor that becomes very strong, until there is an inability to refrain from this behavior" (p. 65). The sexual exhilaration that pyromaniacs sustain from the sight of fire can lead to urination, erection, masturbation, and spontaneous orgasm (Money, 1985). Research shows that up to forty percent of all arson can be attributed to pyromaniacs (Masters and Roberson, 1990). Interviews completed by the FBI regarding the history of serial murderers reveal that over half (56 percent) of twenty-five serial murderers admitted to setting fires during their childhood. Fifty-two percent were fire setters during adolescence. Twenty-eight percent continued their obsession with fire through adulthood (Ressler et al., 1988).

The third symptom of the MacDonald triad is cruelty to animals. Being cruel to an animal displays a lack of empathy as well as a desire to control the animal. Children that are cruel to animals during their childhood exhibit aggressive behaviors that can lead to more extreme violence. Numerous researchers have linked the existence of animal cruelty to other forms of violence (Mead, 1964; Tapia, 1971;

Rigdon and Tapia, 1977; Hutton, 1981; DeViney, Dickert and Lockwood, 1983; Kellert and Felthous, 1985; Tingle et al., 1986; Ascione, 1993; Boat, 1995; Arkow, 1996; Arluke and Lockwood, 1997; Ascione, Weber, and Wood, 1997; Ascione, 1998; Lockwood and Ascione, 1998; Ascione, 1999; Ascione and Arkow, 1999; Flynn, 1999a; Flynn, 1999b; Flynn, 2000; Ascione, 2000).

Research on the Triad

Research regarding the triad of behaviors as a whole is very limited. Since the MacDonald triad was first introduced, few researchers have investigated its effectiveness in explaining future aggression. Hellman and Blackman (1966) studied adult inmates charged with aggressive and nonaggressive crimes in an attempt to determine if the triad is an effective indicator of later aggressive behavior. The inmates were asked if they have engaged in all the behaviors of the triad, part of the triad, or none of the triad during their childhood. The authors found that a positive relationship existed between the triad behaviors and criminal behavior. Seventy-four percent of aggressive criminals in their study exhibited the entire triad or part of the triad compared to only twenty-eight percent of nonaggressive criminals.

In a similar study, Wax and Haddox (1974) found the triad to be functional in predicting future violent behavior. The study focused on forty-six institutionalized delinquent adolescent males. Of the total, six admitted to engaging in all three MacDonald triad behaviors. Those that admitted to the triad were compared to those who denied engaging in at least one behavior of the triad over a twelve-month period. At the end of the observation period, institutional officials considered the six youths

that engaged in the triad to be the most assaultive and potentially dangerous delinquents in the facility. In a follow-up study completed by Geddes (1977) after Wax and Haddox's (1974) initial observations, the youths in the original study continued to display aggressive behaviors, with five of the six displaying greater aggressive behavior than expected.

As the previous literature in this chapter indicates, academicians and criminal investigators who study serial murder have made great strides in advancing the public's knowledge of this phenomenon, but more work needs to be done. Only a few recent studies examine the relationship between the three MacDonald triad behaviors and future aggression. The two outdated studies that do suggest a possible link between such behavior and violence. Moreover, few studies have examined individual characteristics and their relationship to serial murder. Therefore, the next chapter explores the dynamics of animal cruelty and its possible relationship to violence against humans.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF ANIMAL CRUELTY LITERATURE

Definitions of Animal Cruelty

What exactly constitutes cruelty to animals? Although there are competing legal definitions, Kellert and Felthous (1985) defined animal cruelty as "the willful infliction of harm, injury, and intended pain on a nonhuman animal" (p. 195). Two years later, Felthous and Kellert (1987) expanded the scope of their definition to define "substantial" cruelty to animals as a "pattern of deliberately, repeatedly, and unnecessarily hurting vertebrate animals in a manner likely to cause serious injury" (p. 1715).

In 1992, Vermeulen and Odendaal added to the growing list of animal cruelty definitions. In a presentation before the Sixth International Conference on Human-Animal Interactions, Vermeulen and Odendaal defined animal cruelty as "the intentional, malicious and irresponsible, as well as the unintentional and ignorant infliction of physiological or psychological pain, suffering, deprivation, death or destruction of a companion animal, by both single or repeated incidents." While other researchers present a longer, in-depth definition Ascione (1993) stated that animal cruelty was simply a "socially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress to and/or death of an animal" (p. 228).

It is evident that there are competing definitions regarding animal cruelty within academic arenas. However, the actions that constitute animal cruelty are not the only area of debate when discussing this issue. Some researchers suggest that

children who are cruel to animals are likely to become violent against humans (Mead, 1964; Tapia, 1971; Rigdon and Tapia, 1977; Kellert and Felthous, 1985; Tingle et al., 1986; Ascione, 1992; Ascione, 1993; Arluke and Lockwood, 1997; Arluke, Levin, Luke and Ascione, 1999). The idea that animal cruelty leads to other forms of aggression against humans emerged in the mid 1960s.

Animal Cruelty and Aggression

Mead (1964) is one of the first researchers to indicate that childhood cruelty to animals may indicate the formation of a spontaneous, assaultive character disorder. She suggests that animal cruelty "could prove a diagnostic sign, and that such children, diagnosed early, could be helped instead of being allowed to embark on a long career of episodic violence and murder" (p. 22). The impact of Mead's recommendation was evident over twenty years later when the American Psychiatric Association took note.

In 1987, animal cruelty was added to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-III R (DSM-III R)* as a symptom of conduct disorders and was later kept in the 1994, *DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association, 1987; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). According to the *DSM-III R* and *DSM-IV*'s description of conduct disorders, physical violence and harm on humans and animals is common. Additionally, "the child may have no concern for the feelings, wishes, and wellbeing of others, as shown by callous behavior, and may lack appropriate feelings of guilt or remorse" (p. 53). In other words, children who abuse animals may develop a lack of feeling toward all living creatures.

The emergence of animal cruelty in the realm of psychological conduct disorders gives some validity to what numerous researchers have been attempting to prove for a number of years. Tapia (1971) was the first to systematically study children who abused animals. The purpose of the study was to gain a greater understanding of those who abused animals. Although Tapia's sample of eighteen animal abusing children (all boys) was small, the study assists in the development of a profile of those who are cruel to animals. Tapia (1971) and a follow-up study conducted by Rigdon and Tapia (1977) found that the eighteen boys had numerous other antisocial behaviors in conjunction with animal cruelty. These behaviors included temper control problems, bullying, destructive tendencies, and lying. Tapia (1971) and Rigdon and Tapia's (1977) initial research laid the foundation for future research in the field.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of the link between cruelty to animals and later aggression was completed by Kellert and Felthous in 1985. They interviewed 152 individuals, both criminals and noncriminals, and found that aggressive criminals were much more cruel to animals in childhood as compared to nonaggressive criminals and noncriminals. Throughout the entire study, 373 acts of violence toward animals were reported by the 152 subjects. Twenty-five percent of the aggressive criminals reported at least five cases of childhood animal cruelty compared to less than six percent of the remaining subjects.

Tingle et al. (1986) completed a more specific study on childhood animal abuse. The study examined the histories of twenty-one convicted rapists and forty-

three convicted child molesters in order to detect instances of animal cruelty. The results revealed that higher levels of behavioral aggression were demonstrated in those that engaged in animal cruelty in childhood. The authors found that thirty percent of convicted child molesters and forty-eight percent of convicted rapists had perpetrated acts of animal cruelty in their childhood. However, the authors cautioned that the sample may not be representative of rapists and child molesters in general.

In accordance with the previous research, one can suggest that being cruel to animals can possibly lead to being cruel to humans. However, is cruelty to animals a significant predictor of future serial murderers? Even though a possible link has been suggested, very little academic attention has focused on this connection.

Animal Cruelty and Serial Murderers

Since the late 1970s, the FBI has considered animal cruelty to be a possible indicator of future serial murder. The FBI documented the connection between cruelty to animals and serial murder following a study of thirty-five imprisoned serial murderers. The convicted murderers were asked questions regarding their childhood cruelty toward animals. Over half of the serial murderers admitted to hurting or torturing animals as a child or adolescent (Humane Society of the United States, The, 2001). Over a decade later, Ressler, the founder of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit (now termed the Investigative Support Unit) which profiles serial murderers, along with collaborating authors, completed another study examining the link between animal cruelty and serial murder.

Ressler et al. (1988) completed a study on various behavioral characteristics of thirty-six sexual murderers, with all but seven being serial murderers. The study encompassed the largest number of serial murderers for research to date. The focus of the study was to provide detailed qualitative characteristics as well as to test specific quantitative variables of the men in the sample. The data were collected between 1979 and 1983 by FBI agents. Of the thirty-six men, twenty-eight were tested for certain childhood characteristics, in conjunction with the available data. The authors discovered that a substantial number of the twenty-eight convicted serial murderers in the study had engaged in cruelty to animals. Thirty-six percent of the offenders had perpetrated animal cruelty as a child, forty-six percent were cruel to animals as an adolescent, and thirty-six percent continued their abusive nature toward animals as an adult.

It seems to be a common assumption among law enforcement officials that animal cruelty often leads to violence against humans. The early studies by the FBI support this assumption. Nonetheless, very few studies have examined this possible link. Fortunately, theoretical support exists for the link between animal cruelty and later aggression toward humans. Therefore, the next chapter will present and explore the dynamics of childhood animal cruelty and serial murder within the context of social learning theory with particular emphasis paid to the graduation hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

It is human nature to try to explain and understand individuals' behavior. So when a crime occurs, especially one of the magnitude of serial murder, one desires to understand why it occurs. This chapter will provide a theoretical foundation for the link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder. It will examine how some children who are cruel to animals can eventually graduate to serial murder.

Competing explanations for criminal behavior have existed for centuries. One such explanation for this type of behavior is the social learning perspective. The foundation for social learning theory has been in existence for over one hundred years. Tarde, a French social theorist, presented the first underpinnings of learning theory in the late 1800s. Tarde's theory of imitation proposes that behavior is socially learned according to three laws (Tarde, 1912).

Tarde's first law of imitation is the law of close contact. This law suggests that individuals are more likely to learn behaviors, customs, and ideas from those that they have interacted with most frequently. The second law is the law of imitation of superiors by inferiors. This law suggests that those of higher power and status are more likely to be imitated by their subordinates. People imitate those in high positions in hopes of acquiring the benefits of status and position. The third law is the law of insertion. This law asserts that when conflict arises between behaviors, people choose and copy the newest behavior. Tarde's theory of imitation lays the foundation for modern day social learning theories.

In 1939, Sutherland formally introduced his theory of differential association. The differential association theory builds on the nominalist, interactionist perspective that emphasizes the role that social interaction plays in forming an individual's attitudes and behaviors (Hughes, Kroehler, and Vander Zanden, 1999). Sutherland argued that deviant or criminal behavior is not a consequence of sociological oppressive factors, but rather a result of learned behavior. He contends that criminals are surrounded by definitions favorable to the commission of the criminals acts, while definitions opposing criminal behavior are relatively absent (McCaghy, 1985). Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory states:

· Criminal behavior is learned in association with those who define such behavior favorably and in isolation from those who define it unfavorably, and that a person in an appropriate situation engages in such criminal behavior if, and only if, the weight of the favorable definitions exceeds the weight of the unfavorable definitions (p. 234).

According to Sutherland, as individuals communicate within interpersonal groups, they learn behaviors from other people in the group, including criminal behavior. The differential association theory maintains that casual, everyday interactions with individuals who commit illegal activity are not sufficient in learning why and how to commit criminal behavior. The quality of association with criminals required for learning the behavior varies according to each individual. One individual

may need to be engulfed in criminal activity for a long period of time before they learn the behavior, while another person may only need minimal association to learn the behavior. It is important to point out that not everyone will succumb to certain behaviors, regardless of the frequency and intensity of the association that they have with the behavior or with the people engaging in the behavior (Sutherland, 1939; Sutherland, 1947; Sutherland, 1949; Hughes et al., 1999).

To build further on earlier social learning theories, Burgess and Akers (1966) incorporated theories from both sociology and psychology to help explain criminal activity. In their article, "A Differential Association: Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior," the authors utilize Skinner's operant conditioning to explain criminal behavior. According to Skinner (1953), an event at one point in time leads to an action later. Whether the reinforcement of the behavior is positive or negative ultimately determines the nature of the behavior. According to Burgess and Akers (1966), criminal behavior is a response to a past stimulus. In other words, individuals commit criminal acts as a result of something that occurred earlier in their lives. The reinforcement or lack of reinforcement of the original event largely determines how the individual will react later.

Social Learning and Murder

Few theorists have explained murder with the use of social learning theory. However, Dollard and Miller's (1950) theory of social learning is an exception. According to this perspective, every individual is socialized to seek affection and approval from those they love. When that approval is met, both parties feel satisfied

with the outcome. However, if a successful resolution is not made by the acting parties, frustration is produced for the one seeking the approval and satisfaction. The frustrated individual transfers anger to someone who cannot retaliate. In the case of serial murderers, the individual who first causes the frustration holds a certain degree of control which inhibits them from retaliating against them. Therefore, the frustrated individual vents their anger on weaker creatures.

Amsel's (1958) frustration theory helps to adequately understand the scope of the frustration experienced by these potential killers. Under the frustration theory, an individual that suffers a form of humiliation later associates certain situations with the humiliation. The original humiliation generates what is called a frustration response. In turn, the situations associated with the humiliation also produce anticipatory frustration responses. Those responses motivate the individual to avoid potentially humiliating situations, even to the point of violence. The individual acts prematurely in anticipation of a perceived humiliating situation. According to Katz (1988), the murderer experiences a form of humiliation through a past interaction. The individual then kills as a method of reestablishing what is just. The act of murder is seen as justified for the previous wrongdoings.

An important aspect of the frustration and humiliation response theories is the manner in which the aggressors restore their dignity. As Dollard and Miller (1950) points out, many humiliated individuals take out their frustration on weaker creatures, including animals. This display of aggression is a method of venting and restoring confidence within themselves. While the source of the humiliation may still be present

in the individual's life, the aggressive behavior toward animals continues, in turn increasing the likelihood of graduating to humans to fulfill their need for retribution.

Graduation Hypothesis

For decades, it has been suggested that animal abuse leads to other forms of violence against humans. The graduation hypothesis, although still a hypothesis, ultimately impacts the way people view animal cruelty. Under the graduation hypothesis, animal abusers later progress, or graduate, to more serious forms of violence against humans. According to Ascione and Lockwood (2001), the graduation (escalation) hypothesis proposes "that the presence of cruelty to animals at one developmental period predicts interpersonal violence at a later developmental period" (p. 40). The graduation hypothesis gained substantial support and recognition in 1994 when it was codified in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

It has been proposed that many serial murderers begin killing vulnerable animals as a method of responding to humiliation and to show their power and domination. These killers may eventually graduate to humans when the animals no longer meet their needs (Arluke et al., 1999; National Association for Humane and Environmental Education, 2001). Ascione (1992) and Ascione (1993) suggest that cruelty against animals leads to the development of a lack of empathy for living creatures (animals and humans), which may in turn lead to more serious forms of violence.

According to Arluke and Lockwood (1997), cruelty to animals allows children to become either desensitized to heartless violence or learn to enjoy the feelings of administering pain and suffering. This may ultimately fuel their desire to graduate to human violence. A child that is cruel to animals during an early developmental period is likely to develop interpersonal violence in a consequent developmental period. This growing violence toward animals will likely become unfulfilling, which may lead them to become violent toward humans in order to fully enjoy the act (Arluke et al., 1999).

According to the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE) (2001), people who are violent as a general rule are violent to all forms of life. It is suggested that children who are cruel to animals are so because animals are typically vulnerable and weaker. As the child gets older, they may extend their violence to humans, and in turn direct their violence toward perceived weaker humans.

According to social learning theory, an individual can learn to commit acts of aggression. One may even learn to kill humans by first being cruel to animals. According to humiliation/frustration social learning theories, individuals abuse animals as a means of transferring their anger from one human to weaker humans or animals. As the graduation hypothesis suggests, individuals who begin with cruelty towards animals may then graduate to being aggressive toward humans, even to the point of murder.

This study will address whether the selected cases are serial murderers using Egger's (1998) definition, and whether animal cruelty could be linked to serial murder

using the graduation hypothesis. The next chapter will outline the use of case studies in research and how it will be utilized to answer the two research questions of this study.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

Due to the nature of serial murder research, a case study analysis will be used for this study. According to Yin (1994), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). When studying serial murder, it is extremely difficult to do quantitative research. Quantitative research, including surveys and face-to-face interviews with questionnaires, requires first hand interaction between the sample and the researcher. The majority of the serial murderers in question are deceased and therefore unavailable for questioning. Case studies enable researchers to study subjects through literature and therefore identify common themes or characteristics (Yin, 1994).

When conducting research through case studies, there are five essential components. The first component is the study's questions. These questions would address the "how" and "why" of the subject matter. According to Yin (1994), the first step of the study should be clearly stating the nature of the questions. The second component is stating propositions, if applicable. Through propositions, the researcher can direct the appropriate attention to certain areas of the study. The third component is the unit of analysis. To avoid misconceptions and mistakes in analyzing the data, the unit of analysis should clearly be defined. It is essential to specify if a case is measured on an individual level or group level. The fourth component is linking the data to the established propositions. Researchers can detect themes or patterns between cases

that support the proposition. The fifth and final component to a case study is the criteria for interpreting a study's findings. Yin (1994) points out that there are no set guidelines for interpreting data, making this aspect of case studies the most unpredictable, because interpretations are subjective.

For the purpose of this study, five cases were selected from fourteen serial murderers identified to have engaged in childhood animal cruelty. While numerous other serial murderers engaged in animal cruelty as children, they were excluded from the study because they did not meet the characteristics of Egger's (1998) definition of serial murder. Other serial murderers were excluded due to their nationality; this study of serial murder is limited to American serial murderers only. The cases selected were largely chosen because of the amount of information available on the serial murderer in question. The case studies were developed from information gathered from *Serial Killers* (Norris, 1988), *Hunting Humans: The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers, Volume I* (Newton, 1990), *The Confessions of Henry Lee Lucas* (Cox, 1991), *The Milwaukee Murders* (Davis, 1991), *Murder and Mayhem* (Ellroy, 1991), *Henry Lee Lucas* (Norris, 1991), *The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (Lane and Gregg, 1992), *Jeffery Dahmer* (Norris, 1992a), *Walking Time Bombs* (Norris, 1992b), *Silent Rage* (Newton, 1994) and *A Father's Story* (Dahmer, 1995).

Research Questions

This study will use the individual serial murderer as the unit of analysis. Each of the five cases will address two research questions. The first question is: Does the

case meet the criteria for serial murder using Egger's (1998) definition of serial murder? This question allows the researcher to specifically identify the cases as true serial murderers. As mentioned earlier, the serial murderers that did not meet the specified criteria were excluded from the study.

The remainder of the cases will focus on animal cruelty in childhood. The second question is: How is animal cruelty linked to serial murder based on social learning theory, specifically the graduation hypothesis? This provides the basic framework for the overall interpretation of the cases. It is important to note that the intention of this study is not to affirm that the existence of animal cruelty in childhood alone leads to serial murder. This study simply suggests that there is a possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder.

There are numerous explanations offered in serial murder literature that attempt to explain the hows and whys of victimization (Hickey, 1997; Egger, 1998). The objective of this study is to explore the link between animal cruelty in childhood and serial murder, under the theoretical backbone of the graduation hypothesis. To adequately explore the dynamics of the graduation hypothesis, one must develop a detailed descriptive framework for compiling the case studies. One method of forming an appropriate framework is through repeated observations. Once again, it is important to note that the purpose of this study is exploratory in nature and not intended to explain the behavior in question. The next chapter will present the case studies of the five selected serial murderers.

Following Carroll's first experience with his mother and her lover, Vesta ordered Carroll to keep the events secret. She threatened to beat Carroll if he told anyone what he had witnessed. Although Carroll never told his father or anyone else of his mother's secret relationship, Vesta became very cruel towards him. She would punish him for no apparent reason, often humiliating him in front of others. The young boy gradually became a convenient target upon which Vesta vented her anger and frustration. She would also allow her secret friends to physically punish him. These punishments progressively worsened as Carroll got older. A particular "special" punishment that Vesta put her son through had a profound effect on him. She would force Carroll to dress up like a girl and serve her and her friends coffee. This act embarrassed and humiliated the young boy and forced him into a state of seclusion. Devastated and angered by his mother's actions, Carroll found peace alone under the family house in a small dark crawl space. It was there that he began to develop his extreme hatred for not only his mother, but women in general.

Unfortunately for Carroll, his mother was not the only person that treated him like a girl. The children in the neighborhood continuously teased Carroll about his "sissy" name. It was not uncommon for Carroll to be teased to the point of retaliation toward the other children. On numerous occasions, young Carroll would return home in tears, upset by the children's comments. When he was eight, the confusion of these childhood encounters was compounded when an older boy showed him how to masturbate. His mother's treatment, the teasing by the other children, and the

newfound act of masturbation, along with his growing hatred of women led to Carroll questioning his sexuality.

Things did not get any better for Carroll following his father's return from service. The secret that Carroll and his mother kept caused him to live in fear of her. Carroll also began to develop a lack of respect for his father for not being a "man." Carroll viewed his father as weak for not standing up for him against the other children and secretly looked down upon him for not seeing what his mother was doing. Because of his feelings toward his father and his mother, Carroll did not have any positive role models early in his life.

Carroll's first experience with death came at an early age. It began when he was eight. While playing with some playmates, a young girl sat on him and smothered him with her genitals. Frightened, Carroll was relieved to hear the voice of his mother approaching. However, while she removed the girl from on top of Carroll, she proceeded to beat the young boy for no reason. Vesta repeatedly struck her son with open hands that knocked him off his feet, only to be stopped by the voices of her sister and brother-in-law in the distance. Carroll then ran to his secret hiding place beneath the house. There he was completely safe and alone, other than the family's puppy that had followed him.

While under the house, Carroll thought about his experience and became extremely angry. This anger was released through intense sobbing. While sobbing, he held the little puppy in his grasp and relived the situation with his mother. As the frustration built, he began to strangle the puppy until it was eventually dead. At first,

Carroll was surprised that he had killed the animal, even sad to a point. However, the emotions that Carroll felt following the death of the puppy were much more powerful than remorse. Carroll felt as if he had strangled his mother and all the others who had harassed him. The act of murdering the animal gave him a sense of power and control over his life.

Later the same day, Carroll went out with some friends to the harbor to swim. On the way, one of the boys in the group began to harass Carroll about his "sissy" name. Much to his playmates surprise, Carroll responded for the first time with physical retaliation. He landed a series of punches that knocked the boy down. A few minutes later while away from the other boys, Carroll jumped on top of the boy and held him under the water until he was dead, leaving the body in the bottom of the harbor. Once the boy was found, the death was ruled an accident. Killing the boy gave Carroll back some of his dignity and power which changed his life forever.

Following this incident Carroll began to have urges to kill other children. The urges that first developed as a means of retribution had transformed into a pathological way to gain thrill and satisfaction. All through elementary school, Carroll fantasized about killing other children and even attempted it on numerous occasions. However, before his planned attacks could be played out, they were foiled by others inadvertently. He managed to suppress his murderous urges through fantasies. Nonetheless, as he got older his fantasies began to become more influential. As he did as a child, Carroll resorted to animals to fulfill his urge to kill. Shortly after his first

marriage, Carroll strangled several kittens. This act lead to an even greater desire to kill.

It is unknown when Carroll killed his first human victim as an adult, even he is not certain. It is documented that he was in and out of jails, prisons, and mental hospitals the majority of his life. In young adulthood, Carroll became involved in burglarizing liquor stores to support his alcoholism. These acts combined with a variety of other aggressive behaviors led to Carroll's involvement with the judicial system.

Carroll's first victims were married women that he picked up at bars. Carroll chose these women in retrospect to his mother's actions. He would lure them to a secluded location where he would strangle them to death, just as he did the animals. Sometimes Carroll would have sex with the women prior to murdering them, while other times he would wait to have sex with their bodies after killing them. Toward the end of his killing rampage, Carroll began to kill women indiscriminately because his desire had escalated beyond his control. At the time of his arrest, Carroll admitted to numerous murders. However, he claimed not to remember the true number of his victims because of alcohol intoxication. Carroll was eventually charged with a total of 16 murders across numerous states. It is important to note that the number of murders was calculated based on the number of bodies discovered. The true number of Carroll's victims will perhaps never be known. On December 6, 1985, at 2:05 a.m., Carroll Edward Cole was executed by lethal injection in Carson City, Nevada.

Case Study # 2

Jeffery Lionel Dahmer was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on May 6, 1960. He was the first of two sons born to Lionel and Joyce Dahmer. At the time of Jeffery's birth, Lionel was finishing up his degree in electrical engineering. Upon completing his Masters degree from Marquette University in the fall of 1962, Lionel packed his family up and moved to Ames, Iowa, where he pursued a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry. In 1966, after he received his doctorate, Lionel accepted a job in Bath, Ohio, and uprooted his family once again. The repeated movings may have led to Jeffery's inability to make or want to make friends. Jeffery moved for the final time in 1968, when his father purchased a house with substantial land in a secluded forested area of Bath. This move would prove to be a crucial event in the eight year-old's life.

While living in relative isolation from other children his age, Jeffery began to engage in other forms of entertainment. At the age of ten, he began to experiment with the bodies of dead animals. At first, Jeffery would only ride his bike around the neighborhood with a plastic bag, collect road kill and other dead animals, and dissect them. However, as he got older and more intrigued by these creatures, he began to catch and kill animals for examination. Jeffery would remove the skin of the animals, soak their bones in acid, and mount their heads on stakes behind his house. As it was discovered later, this gruesome behavior would be replicated with humans in his small apartment in Milwaukee.

As Jeffery got older, the nature of life in his immediate family drastically changed. His mother and father progressively began to argue more, making an already

uncomfortable home even worse for young Jeffery. Jeffery felt as if he was an outsider in his own family. Of the two sons, he was the least favored and was treated accordingly. As a method of coping with the friction within his family, Jeffery turned to alcohol. By 14, Jeffery had developed an alcoholic dependency. He had been drunk numerous times and continued to abuse the substance. Coupling the use of alcohol with his fascination for dead animals, Jeffery progressed to the next logical step in his macabre hobby. He turned his attention to humans.

In June of 1978, two weeks after his high school graduation, Jeffery picked up a hitchhiker in the vicinity of his home. After having a few drinks, Jeffery hit the man in the head with a barbell, then strangled him to death when he attempted to leave. Following the murder, Jeffery dismantled the body as he had done dozens of times before with animals. When his experimentation was complete, he disposed of the body.

The situation in Jeffery's home had worsened around the time of his first murder. On July 24, 1978, Lionel and Joyce Dahmer divorced. The separation of his parents put Jeffery further back into seclusion. In the month following the divorce, Joyce took Jeffery's younger brother David and moved to Wisconsin, leaving the 18 year-old Jeffery to live in their home in Bath, Ohio, alone. This time allowed Jeffery to fully explore his fascination with death. He continued to kill and dismember animals. This seclusion from society left Jeffery extremely socially inadequate and unable to cope with normal encounters.

In the fall of 1978, Jeffery entered Ohio State University, but did not return for the second half of his freshman year. The following month, he enlisted in the Army in an attempt to rejoin society. While in the army, he put his fascination with death to good use by completing his training as a medical specialist. However, he continued to abuse alcohol. After serving three years, he was discharged from the army for his alcohol addiction. Following his exit from the armed forces, Jeffery moved around before settling in Wisconsin to live with his paternal grandmother.

Jeffery's return to Wisconsin brought with it a more openly deviant lifestyle. While living with his grandmother, Jeffery began to come into contact with law enforcement officials for a variety of reasons. His first brush occurred in 1982 when he was cited for indecent exposure at Wisconsin's state fair. Over the next few years, Jeffery's actions progressively intensified. In 1986, Jeffery was arrested for masturbating in public. He was charged and convicted of disorderly conduct. His punishment was a one-year suspended sentence with an order to receive counseling.

Jeffery's lawless activities reached an all time high the following year when he killed the first of his sixteen victims during a four-year murder rampage. This act of murder made Jeffery feel good and motivated him to kill again. Each of Jeffery's murders were slightly different depending on the circumstances. However, the majority involved extreme mutilation of the bodies, just as he had done with the animals. He would either rape the boys prior to or after killing them. Jeffery would also remove the skin and meat from the bodies, clean the bones with acid, and eat the meat. It was evident that he had begun to live out his early fantasies of

experimentation with animals. Two years and two more murders later, Jeffery moved into his own apartment in Milwaukee. Here as years before in the family house in Bath, Ohio, Jeffery was isolated from the outside world where he could act on out his demented fantasies.

Over the next few years, Jeffery would continue to engage in public deviant sexual behavior all the while killing "suspected" homosexual boys. On numerous occasions, Jeffery was charged with sex crimes. In 1988, he was arrested for molesting a 13 year-old boy, then charged with sexual assault in 1989. Although he was sentenced to five years of probation, Jeffery continued his murderous ways and killed 12 more young men while serving his probation.

On July 22, 1991, Jeffery's killing cycle stopped when police entered his apartment and arrested him. The police were directed to the residence following the escape of what was to be Jeffery's next victim. The young man who had eluded Jeffery told the police what he had seen in the apartment. A few days later, Jeffery was charged with four counts of murder with additional 15 counts to shortly follow. Due to the lack of remains of one of the Milwaukee victims, charges could not be made on that particular body.

On February 17, 1992, Jeffery Lionel Dahmer was found guilty of 15 counts of first-degree murder. The conviction entailed 15 life sentences with an additional ten years per life sentence. Although Jeffery wanted to be put to death, under Wisconsin state law, the death penalty was forbidden. A few months later, Jeffery received another life sentence in Ohio when he was charged with the murder of his first victim.

Jeffery Dahmer remained in prison until he was killed by another inmate on November 28, 1994.

Case Study # 3

Edmund Emil Kemper III was born in Santa Cruz, California, in 1948. He was the unfortunate product of a broken and abusive home. At the age of nine, Edmund's parents divorced leaving him to live with his mother. She was very domineering towards Edmund. If he did not live up to her expectations, she would punish him in unusual ways. She would lock him in the basement for long periods of time as a method of discipline. These acts left Edmund with a sense of personal inadequacy and a timid and resentful nature towards others. As Edmund grew older, he developed a deep-seeded hatred toward his mother. In fact, Edmund began to fantasize about killing her.

Edmund began to display signs of demented fantasies. By the age of ten, he played death games with his sister. In their bedrooms, the two pretended to execute each other, as if one or the other was in the electric chair. Edmund would also use knives to cut the limbs off of his sister's dolls. It was not long after this, young Edmund was living out his dark ambitions on the family pets. Edmund took the family's cat and buried it up to its neck; then subsequently cut off its head in order to return it to his bedroom as a trophy. Shortly after Edmund's mother discovered that the cat was gone, she got another one. Giving into his deranged urges, Edmund proceeded to hack the new pet into pieces with his machete. After the cat was in

several pieces, he returned the bloody appendages to his bedroom closet which were later found by his mother.

The discovery of the dead cat in Edmund's closet led his mother to brand him a "weirdo." As his mother's harassment increased, Edmund ran away to live with his estranged father. However, the young boy was not wanted and was eventually sent away. At age 13, Edmund went to live with his paternal grandparents on a ranch in rural California. Concerned that Edmund's sadistic behavior with the family cats was a sign of his true aggression, his mother warned her ex-husband that his parents could be in danger.

Edmund's life with his grandparents was much like his experience as a young child in his home. He would get into frequent arguments and altercations with his grandparents, especially his grandmother. Following an argument in 1963, Edmund shot his grandmother in the back of the head, took a knife from the kitchen, and mutilated her body. When his grandfather returned home, Edmund met him on the porch with the same gun and shot him to death, leaving the body in the yard. After killing his grandparents, Edmund called his mother to inform her of his actions and then called the sheriff to confess. The 15 year-old told police that he simply wondered what it would feel like to kill his grandparents.

Edmund would spend the next few years in a mental institution being counseled for his actions and desires. At the age of 21, he was released and declared "cured." Following his release, Edmund went back to live with his mother. By this time, Edmund had grown to be six feet eight inches tall and weighed close to 300

pounds. However, Edmund's stature did not stop his mother from berating and arguing with him. The next two years of his life would consist of frequent and violent arguments with his mother. As a result, he became more hostile and violent toward others and began to harbor murderous fantasies once again.

On May 7, 1972, 23 year-old Edmund could not control his murderous urges. On that day, Edmund picked up two female college students hitchhiking to Fresno State University. Edmund drove them to an isolated canyon, stabbed them to death with his large hunting knife he named "the general," returned to his room with the bodies where he took pictures of his trophies, decapitated and dissected the bodies, and proceeded to have sex with various organs. Once the activities with the corpses had become boring, Edmund gathered the various pieces of the bodies into a plastic bag and buried them in the mountains. The severed heads were thrown into a roadside ravine.

Over the following year, Edmund would kill six more female victims with each murder growing more brutal and demented. He cooked some of his victims flesh in a macaroni casserole. It was obvious that Edmund was becoming more pathological. Due to the fact that a majority of the young women Edmund killed were college students, he acquired the label of "Co-ed Killer." But soon, the co-ed killer's murderous rampage would come to an end.

On Easter Sunday, 1973, Edmund fulfilled his longtime murderous desire. As he relived the years of torment at the hands of his mother, he finally got the courage to kill her. Edmund crushed his mother's skull with a mallet while she slept. After she

died, he mutilated her body, and decapitated her head. He then proceeded to masturbate in his mother's mouth. Following his mother's death, Edmund invited her best friend over and subsequently killed her. After the murders, Edmund took his mother's friend's car and left town. After a couple of days of traveling, Edmund stopped in Colorado and phoned the Santa Cruz, California, police to confess to the "Co-ed" murders. Thinking that the call was a prank, the police left Edmund at the pay phone for over two hours before sending the local police to question him. When law enforcement officials realized that the confession was not a hoax, Edmund was arrested.

Edmund was charged with eight counts of murder. At the end of his trial in April, 1973, he was found guilty on all charges. During sentencing when the judge asked him what punishment he felt he deserved, Edmund said that he should receive "death by torture." However, in the state of California the judge could not give Edmund the death penalty. Therefore, he was sentenced to life in prison, with the possibility of parole. Edmund filed for parole in 1980 and was denied. To this day, Edmund Kemper remains in a California prison.

Case Study # 4

Henry Lee Lucas was born in Blacksburg, Virginia, on August 23, 1936. He was the youngest of nine children born into a dysfunctional family. The Lucas family lived in a two-room, dirt-floor log cabin in the woods outside of town. The closest neighbor of the Lucas' was two miles away. The location of the home allowed Henry's father, Anderson Lucas, to brew and bootleg whiskey, while his mother, Viola

Lucas, prostituted herself out to neighbors. Because Anderson Lucas lost his legs after passing out drunk on a train track, Viola was the ruler of the house.

Viola was an extremely abusive mother and wife, often physically punishing both her husband and young Henry. However, the abuse did not stop at physical beatings. She would often force them to watch her have sex with other men. When the parade of men became too much to bear, Anderson drug himself outside in the cold to avoid the encounter and subsequently contracted pneumonia and died. The death of his father further fueled a hatred of women that his mother had ignited.

With his father out of the picture, Henry began to take the full brunt of Viola's abuse. It was a well known fact that Viola did not like Henry and took every available opportunity to humiliate him. Besides the extreme physical beatings he received, she also took every step possible to embarrass the young child. In 1943, when Henry started school, she forced him to go to school in a dress and no shoes. When a sympathetic teacher gave Henry some shoes, his mother beat him for accepting the gift.

Viola's abuse did not stop with her son. She made a habit to kill anything to which Henry grew attached. Every pet that Henry had and liked was killed by his mother in front of him. These acts caused Henry to feel that there was no value to life. Life was something that could be easily taken without much thought. When Henry's eye was gouged out with a knife, Viola did not take him to the doctor until it was too late to save it. He had to receive a glass eye.

At age seven, when Henry did not pick up the wood the way his mother wanted, she hit him in the back of the head with a piece of lumber. The blow left little Henry lying unconscious for three days. Realizing that Henry's life was in danger, Bernie, Viola's live-in-lover, took the boy to a hospital. The years of physical abuse left Henry with permanent lesions on his brain.

When Henry was ten years-old, his life took a drastic change. He was introduced to bestiality. Bernie, the same man that had saved his life a few years earlier, taught little Henry how to have sex with animals. One day while out in the mountains, Bernie stabbed a calf in the neck then had sex with the dying animal. When he was done, he gave Henry the opportunity to do the same. Henry enjoyed the feeling. Thereafter, he was addicted to sex and began to engage in masturbation and voyeurism.

At age 13, Bernie arranged for Henry to have his first sexual experience with a woman. The 20 year-old woman allowed Henry to have sex with her until he was ready to orgasm. Just prior to ejaculation, she forced him to stop, then laughed about it with Bernie. This experience greatly upset Henry leading to his further distrust of women. Thereafter, Henry focused his sexual attention towards animals. He found that killing animals for sex was relatively easy. Although Henry had learned this behavior with calves, he chose to kill cats and dogs for convenience. While most animals are weaker and vulnerable creatures, cats and dogs are missed less and are easier to retrieve.

While Henry originally killed animals solely for sex, he began to enjoy the act of killing just as much as the sexual experience. This fascination would change his life forever. Henry began to catch small animals and skin them alive for fun. What had begun as a means for sexual gratification had graduated to motiveless murder. With each torturous murder, Henry became more obsessed with death. At age 15, Henry decided to approach a 17 year-old girl for sex. When she refused his advancement, Henry strangled her and buried her body in the woods. This act was the first in a series of murders that would span more than three decades.

As his parents raised him to steal and bootleg, Henry subsequently turned to a life of petty crimes while hiding his sadistic thoughts. Around the age of 20, Henry began to burglarize homes and businesses in the surrounding areas. Henry received a six-year sentence in prison for these crimes. After numerous escape attempts, he was released in September, 1959. Once out of prison, Henry made a point to stay away from his mother. However, while living with his sister in Michigan, his mother came to visit. During the visit, the two got into a drunken argument when Viola hit Henry over the head with a broom handle. Henry retaliated with a knife strike to her throat, resulting in her death. Following the altercation, Henry stole a car and retreated to his childhood home in Blacksburg, Virginia. After a brief stay, he attempted to hitchhike back to Michigan. While on the highway in Toledo, Ohio, Henry was picked up by a highway patrolman who recognized his picture from a wanted bulletin.

Once in the custody of Michigan authorities, Henry confessed to the murder of his mother and was sentenced to twenty to forty years in prison. Henry refused to do

any of his prison duties and fought with numerous prison employees and inmates. Consequently, two months into his sentence, Henry was transferred to a mental institution because he suffered from hallucinations. Although his mother was no longer able to hurt him, the first 23 years of his life had apparently come back to haunt him while in prison. Ten years after his initial arrival at the Michigan State Penitentiary, Henry was paroled due to overcrowding.

However, his freedom was to be short-lived. While living with his sister and brother-in-law in Michigan, Henry continued to kill and mutilate animals. Then, less than a year later, Henry was arrested for attempting to molest two teenage girls on two separate occasions. He was officially charged and sentenced for simple kidnapping. After serving four years, he was paroled and released.

After his latest release from prison, Henry traveled to Maryland, Texas, and Florida. While in Florida, he met a young bisexual male named Ottis Toole. He and Toole's relationship eventually blossomed into a deadly friendship. While spending time with Toole and his family, Henry fell in love with Toole's mentally retarded 13 year-old niece, Becky. The three went on a nationwide crime spree of petty thefts and burglaries that came to an end following a deadly altercation. While Toole was in Florida visiting family, Henry and Becky got into a physical argument. The physical contact brought back Henry's past and reminded him of his mother. He retaliated with a quick and hard knife stab to the young girl's chest. The attack left the girl dead. Horrified by his actions and genuinely upset, Henry began his reign of murder and mayhem.

Over the next few years, Henry performed and/or participated in numerous acts of tortuous murders. On May 9, 1983, Henry was arrested for gun possession. He proceeded to confess and outline dozens of murders that he had committed alone, as well as with Toole. Henry admitted to viciously stabbing and mutilating women all over the country. Lucas' frequent mobility made it very difficult for law enforcement officials to not only catch him, but to keep track of all his murders. While the true number of victims is not quite known, law enforcement officials claim to have evidence that proves Henry Lee Lucas to be the murderer of at least 69 victims. Lucas claims to have killed as many as 500 people. Police departments across the country are still attempting to prove or disprove many of Lucas's confessions.

Henry received six life sentence terms, two 75-year sentences, and a 60-year sentence in various states, as well as the death sentence in Texas. However, due to his conflicting stories of murder, his death sentence date was delayed for years. It was finally commuted to life in prison and Henry Lee Lucas now resides in a Texas prison where he will live for the remainder of his life.

Case Study # 5

Arthur Shawcross was born in 1945 in Maine. His early childhood was engulfed in parental conflict and physical abuse. The constant arguments with and torment of Arthur by his parents caused him to feel a sense of familial rejection. His mother's actions caused him to feel as if she hated him, which in turn frustrated him as a small child and throughout adolescence. Outside his home, Arthur claimed to have been sexually molested by various girls in the neighborhood. At the age of nine, an

older woman violently molested him by having the young boy perform oral sex on her, which led to his obsession with the activity. This experience led him to associate sex with rage and pain.

As Arthur got older, he had fantasies about different sexual episodes.

Although the thought of oral sex with women flooded his mind, Arthur would engage in his first homosexual experience at 11. After being helped out of a swamp by another boy, the two removed their clothes to swim and eventually touched each other's genitals and had oral sex. Arthur's need for orgasms had begun to control him. After the initial session of touching and oral sex, the two periodically met for further relations. During one of these visits, the boys discovered that sheep had organs similar to a woman. The two took turns having sex with the animal, surprised at how good it felt.

Arthur's early childhood experiences led him to feel that the only way to have sex was by violating someone else's dignity. Since he was still a relatively small child, he turned to farm animals to dominate and achieve sexual gratification. In the act of sexually violating animals, Arthur began to enjoy torturing them in other ways, too. Simply having sex with the animals was not enough, he had to beat them, even to the point of death.

As the years passed, Arthur's secret sexual desires grew. At the age of 14, he experienced his second encounter with a same-sex partner. Although he had been molested before, he had never been fully raped. However, this changed when he got into a stranger's car and was violently raped. Arthur was then left beside the road near

his house. This experience left Arthur unable to orgasm unless he was in pain, a condition that would alter thereafter the way he would live the rest of his life.

As time elapsed, he continued to kill animals while having sex with them. While most teenagers were interacting with other children their age, Arthur was content to be alone. This behavior left him socially inadequate in relationships as he grew older. However, he did engage in his first consensual act of vaginal sex at the age of 18 with a 27 year-old woman. Following the encounter, Arthur got a construction job and appeared to be on the road to nondeviant sexual relationships when he met another young woman. The two were married in 1964 and had a child on October 2, 1965. Their marriage went well until Arthur could no longer control his sexual desires. He began to pick up girls for sex. In 1967, Arthur was drafted to fight in Vietnam which would be another turning point in his life.

While in Vietnam, many things changed in Arthur's life. One year after his enrollment into the military, his wife divorced him leaving him with feelings of resentment and frustration. Arthur then discovered that he had much more ability to act out his fantasies in Vietnam than back in the U.S. As a soldier in a foreign conflict, he possessed powers he had never had. Unfortunately, Arthur quickly began to abuse these privileges and developed a reputation for being cruel and violent to Vietnamese peasants. During one event in particular, Shawcross tortured and killed two Viet Cong women for supposedly hiding ammunition. He shot the first girl without killing her, then tied her to a tree. He went into the hut to find the second girl. He knocked her out with the butt of his gun, gagged her, and tied her up to the tree, too. He then

slit the first girl's throat and decapitated her, placing her head on a pole. Arthur then mutilated the body, cooked, and ate the meat. He then performed oral sex and raped the other girl before cutting her up and shooting her in the head. Her head was also placed on a pole.

Arthur admitted to numerous acts of murder while serving his time in Vietnam. The power allowed him to commit these acts. However, when he returned to the U.S. in 1969, he had even less power than he did before he left. Needless to say, Arthur returned from Vietnam having engaged in numerous acts of stealing, vandalism, and assaults. He was subsequently arrested for burglary and arson and sentenced to two and a half to five years in a state maximum security prison. However, when a riot broke out and Arthur helped a beaten and dying guard to safety, he was released after serving only one and a half years.

The early release served to encourage Arthur back into his previous pathology. A mere three months following his release, Arthur killed his first victim in the U.S. The victim was a ten year-old boy that he knew. The boy followed Arthur into a secluded area where he was hit and strangled to death. He then cut the boy into pieces and ate his penis, testicles, and heart. This act of murder seemingly fueled Arthur's desire to kill again.

Three months after the murder of the little boy, Arthur recovered a drowning eight year-old girl from a river and raped her. He first performed oral sex on her, then had vaginal sex with her. Upon realizing what he had done, he choked her until she passed out. He then buried her alive in the muddy embankment stuffing mud in her

mouth and nostrils until she died. When the crime was linked to Arthur, he admitted to the murder and in turn for a lighter sentence confessed to the murder of the little boy. He was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison for which he served only 15 years due to good behavior.

Ten months after this release from prison, Arthur began his one year and nine month killing rampage around New York. As he had done previously, he sexually assaulted the victims then mutilated their bodies. Arthur's killing spree came to an end on January 3, 1990, after a police helicopter followed him back to the scene of a crime. He was arrested and charged with 11 murders. Arthur Shawcross currently resides in a New York prison where he was sentenced to 250 years without the possibility of parole.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, numerous competing definitions and explanations of serial murder exist in the literature. This chapter will address the two research questions identified in the previous chapter. First, the five cases in this study will be evaluated using Egger's (1998) definition of serial murder to determine if they are in fact serial murderers. Second, each case will be examined to determine if evidence exists to support the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder in addition to applying the graduation hypothesis. Next, the limitations of the study will be presented and outlined. Finally, the conclusion will review the findings of the study and address implications for future research.

Defining Serial Murder

All five cases in this study (Cole, Dahmer, Kemper, Lucas, and Shawcross) qualified as serial murderers using Egger's (1998) definition. Under Egger's definition, six components must be met to be considered a serial murderer. While each case showed a slight variance with every component of the definition, all met the minimum characteristics of serial murder according to Egger.

First, the five serial murderers in this study claimed a victim followed by a subsequent victim(s). While some killed more people than others, they all killed at least ten victims at different times. Second, the majority of the serial murderers' victims had no prior relationship with the killer. While some of the murderers killed

their mothers and other people they previously knew, the majority of the victims in all five cases were complete strangers.

Third, the murderers killed their victims at different times with no association to the previous crimes. Only on a few occasions did any of the murderers kill more than one individual at the same time. Fourth, the victims of all of the serial murderers were either killed or captured at different places. With the exception of Jeffery Dahmer, all victims were killed at different locations. Fifth, the victims were murdered for reasons other than material gain. While Henry Lee Lucas killed some people in the course of a burglary, the majority of his victims were killed for reasons of power and domination rather than material gain.

Finally, the victims held a certain symbolic value to the killer. Carroll Cole killed women who cheated on their husbands, just as his mother had done to his father. Jeffery Dahmer killed boys that he suspected to be homosexual because he disagreed with their behavior. Edmund Kemper killed young women due to the deep-seated hatred of his mother. Henry Lucas killed a variety of people, however, the majority were women. The selection of women was largely due to his feelings toward his mother. Arthur Shawcross killed mostly women, largely due to his past experience with his mother and other women.

Meeting the criteria for Egger's (1998) definition of serial murder is only the first part of this study. The following section will apply the graduation hypothesis to the five cases of serial murder and explore whether childhood animal cruelty was present in the lives of these murderers.

Applying the Graduation Hypothesis

Social learning theories argue that behaviors are learned through social interactions with others. Therefore, one's criminal behavior could be learned earlier in the individual's life. When applying the graduation hypothesis to serial murder, one must first understand what factors motivate the individuals' first act of animal cruelty.

In the case of numerous serial murderers, episodes of prolonged humiliation have been shown to exist during their childhood (Hickey, 1997). As discussed earlier, this humiliation can eventually transform into frustration for the individual. With many serial murderers, the source of humiliation and frustration is from one or both of their parents (Ellis and Gullo, 1971; Willie, 1975; Lunde, 1976; Hazelwood and Douglas, 1980; Ressler et al., 1988). Therefore, it is very difficult for them to gain retribution for the humiliation. After a substantial amount of humiliation and frustration, the child seeks other means of venting their frustration in order to regain their dignity and sense of self (Amsel, 1958; Katz, 1988).

The five serial murderers in this study turned to animals to vent their anger. The person who causes the frustration for the child is seen as too powerful to hurt, so the children choose animals because they are viewed as weak and vulnerable. The act of hurting or killing an animal makes the individual feel as if they have gained some retribution for their pain and suffering.

Within the framework of the graduation hypothesis, children are cruel to animals, then graduate to aggressive behaviors toward humans. After a series of aggressive acts toward animals, the individual gradually increases the amount of

destruction to fully gain the satisfaction of venting their frustration. Therefore, they eventually graduate from violence against animals to violence against humans. In the case of some serial murderers, abusing and torturing animals as a child is a precursory activity for future violence against humans. In essence, the methods and techniques of killing can be tested and mastered.

All five of the cases of serial murder of this study displayed episodes of childhood animal cruelty. Each serial murderer first abused animals, then graduated to killing humans. The five cases will be briefly examined to determine if there is support for the graduation hypothesis.

Carroll Edward Cole was humiliated by his mother from a very early age. The humiliation stemmed from his mother's punishment. After an extensive amount of humiliation, Carroll became frustrated with his inability to gain retribution toward his mother and therefore transferred his anger to animals. After an embarrassing beating from his mother, Carroll strangled a puppy to death. The act made him feel good and powerful. This act gave Carroll back a portion of his dignity and power that his mother had taken away over the years. From that point, he became more aggressive toward anyone who humiliated him, even to the point of death. Carroll graduated from a puppy to a boy, then on to adult women when he was older. Before killing the puppy, Carroll had never showed signs of being aggressive. The initial act of strangling the puppy not only gave Carroll the idea of killing people, but also gave him the courage to vent on humans. Years later Carroll stated that "the real thought of revenge and strangling my mother - any woman - came to me right there, while I was

sitting in that tree. The act of strangulation as a method of killing was born after, and because of, choking that pup. It was the most horrifying way of killing someone I could think of, later taking a different turn and becoming a sick obsession" (Newton, 1994: p. 64-65).

The act of killing the puppy not only initiated a violent side of Carroll, it gave him a method of killing. In adulthood, Carroll killed at least 16 women before being arrested. The majority of the women were taken to a secluded area and strangled much in the same manner he had killed the puppy. Carroll imitated his previous behavior.

Jeffery Dahmer was raised in a family that frequently moved, which in turn left him socially inadequate. He made very few friends and therefore spent a lot of time alone. Jeffery felt that he was the least favorite child, as if he was an outsider in his own family. These factors led to a sense of frustration with his family and others. To deal with his frustration, Jeffery immersed himself in his pathological pursuits. Unfortunately, his first hobby was collecting and dissecting dead animals.

This seemingly innocent childhood activity quickly developed into torturous behavior toward animals. Jeffery began to catch small animals and skin them alive, mutilate the bodies, and dissect them. He would also decapitate cats and dogs and put their heads on poles in his back yard. Following his parents' divorce, the 18 year-old increased his sadistic behavior and eventually killed a male hitchhiker. As he did with animals, Jeffery mutilated, dissected, and then disposed of the body.

As an adult, Jeffery increased his deadly behavior towards suspected homosexual males. He captured and killed the men through a variety of ways. After or before their death, he would mutilate the body as he had done to animals as a child. The bodies were dismembered and stored in barrels and refrigerating units. After torturing small animals as a child, Jeffery Dahmer went on to kill 17 men. It appears he learned the behavior as a child with animals, then simply applied what he had learned to humans.

Edmund Kemper, like Carroll Cole, was raised in an abusive home. The source of the abuse came solely from his mother. She would berate Edmund for numerous reasons or no reason at all. Consequently, as Edmund grew older, he became frustrated and developed a deep-seated hatred for her. Since he felt he could not retaliate against his mother, Edmund vented his anger on the family cat.

Decapitating and mutilating cats made Edmund feel powerful and in control of his life instead of under the control of his mother. As months elapsed, Edmund became increasingly violent. After being sent to live with his grandparents, he killed and then mutilated his grandmother's body with a large kitchen knife following an argument. He then proceeded to kill his grandfather.

After years of psychological therapy in an institution, Edmund appeared to be cured. However, when humiliation from his mother resurfaced, he began to pick up female hitchhikers and kill them. He would mutilate their bodies just as he had with the cats and his grandmother years earlier. Edmund's year long killing spree of at least eight victims ended after he killed his mother. Once the source of the humiliation and

frustration was gone, Edmund did not need to kill again. Therefore, he called authorities and confessed to his numerous murders.

Henry Lee Lucas, like numerous other serial murderers, was raised in an extremely abusive home. Henry's mother would mentally and physically abuse him, often drastically humiliating him. She made him watch her have sex with numerous men. She forced Henry to wear a dress to school for months without shoes, then beat him when he accepted a pair of shoes from a teacher. She would kill Henry's pets.

When Henry was seven, his mother hit him in the head with a board, then left him lying unconscious for three days before her live-in lover took him to the hospital. She cared very little about Henry, which in turn taught him that life was not valuable. His mother's actions frustrated Henry and left him longing to fit in.

By the time Henry was ten, he had been exposed to numerous sexual acts by his mother. However, he had never experienced sex himself. His first experience with sex was with a dead calf that his mother's live-in lover had stabbed. Henry loved the feeling and consequently became addicted to sex. When every attempt at sex with a girl failed at an early age, Henry became more frustrated and resorted to killing animals so he could have sex with them. The more Henry killed animals for sex, the more he enjoyed the act of killing. Eventually, Henry enjoyed killing the animal more than having sex with it. He began to skin live animals simply for fun.

These murderous acts eventually led to Henry killing humans as an adult. As he grew older, animals did not give Henry the desired satisfaction as when he was a child. Therefore, he turned to humans to satisfy his desires. Before Henry Lee Lucas

was arrested for the final time, he had killed at least 69 people. The majority of his victims were women, including the source of his lifelong frustration, his mother.

Arthur Shawcross grew up in a very abusive home where his parents constantly argued. These actions caused him to feel as if they did not want him. Arthur's mother acted as if she hated him, which in turn greatly frustrated him. He felt that there was nothing he could do to please his mother. As he grew older, this frustration carried over into relationships with girls. Arthur eventually engaged in sexual encounters with another boy, then discovered the use of animals for sex.

The two boys had sex with a sheep and was amazed at how good it felt. The experience led Arthur to turn to animals for sex instead of women who frustrated him. As he engaged in bestiality more often, Arthur began to beat the animals during sex, eventually killing a number of them. He found that he enjoyed the sex more when he beat the animals.

As Arthur grew older, he had consensual sex with women and even married numerous times. However, Arthur's desire to kill was still present. Following a tour of duty in Vietnam where Arthur admitted to torturing and raping a number of Viet Cong women, he claimed his first victim in the U.S. After that came a second and subsequently many more victims. Arthur sexually assaulted his victims, killed them, and mutilated their bodies. Arthur Shawcross killed at least eleven people, with all but one being female.

As the previous cases show, a possible link between childhood cruelty to animals and later serial murder may exist. Each serial murderer in this study seemed to

transfer the frustration they received from their mother or other adults toward weaker animals. The abusive behavior continued until the men eventually turned their attention to humans. Inevitably, killing animals may have allowed these men to graduate to killing humans. If killing animals made them feel good, the next logical step for further gratification was humans.

Limitations

While the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder was investigated in this study, limitations exist in conducting serial murder research. First, it is often difficult to gain substantial information on various serial murderers. The most sensational serial murderers receive the bulk of attention from the media and academia. For example, while Jeffery Dahmer killed significantly fewer victims than other serial murders, he received a greater amount of attention. This is largely due to the nature of his murders. He not only killed his victims, he attempted to make zombies out of some of them, as well as cannibalizing them.

The lack of information is largely due to the study of serial murder being in its infancy. While serial murder has been around for decades, it still remains a relatively new field of research, and, therefore, is continually evolving. As the need for serial murder research expands, so to will the amount of literature directed at various aspects of serial murder. In turn, not only will the amount of literature increase, but also the quality of the research.

A second limitation to the study of serial murder is the availability of factual information. While there may be a substantial amount of literature regarding a

particular killer, it may not be credible. It is important to determine if the source of the information is reliable. It is not uncommon to see a slight variance in the information of serial murder literature. Therefore, it is important to choose the information from the most reputable source.

A third and specific limitation to this study was the reporting of cases of childhood animal cruelty. While some sources revealed episodes of childhood animal cruelty, others neglected to address this issue. It is realistic to consider that many more serial murderers may have engaged in childhood animal cruelty. The problem of lack of reporting continues to plague the study of serial murderers.

The final limitation of this study was the design itself. Case study analysis designs are limited in their very nature. When conducting serial murder research, it is all but impossible to do quantitative research, since the samples are incarcerated or deceased. By using a qualitative research method, one can only detect certain patterns that exist between the various cases. While one can show that childhood animal cruelty exists in the cases studied, it is impossible to say that all, or a certain percentage of, serial murderers are cruel to animals as a child. Therefore, it is important to again mention that this study is exploratory in nature and does not intend to imply a direct causation.

Conclusion

While serial murderers have been killing for hundreds of years, very little academic attention has focused on childhood characteristics of these murderers. The bulk of the literature focuses on definitions and adult motivations of serial murder,

practically excluding childhood characteristics. This study examines a possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder.

Using the graduation hypothesis and the humiliation/frustration theory under the framework of social learning theory, one can explain the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder. According to the graduation hypothesis, one can learn to be cruel to animals as a child, then eventually graduate to aggressive behavior towards humans, even to the point of death. Cruelty to animals can come from transferring anger from a source of humiliation or frustration, or both, to a weaker and more vulnerable animal. After a period of time, the frustrated individual eventually needs to transfer the violence to a stronger creature to achieve satisfaction.

The goal of this study was to explore the possible link between childhood animal cruelty and serial murder by applying the graduation hypothesis, not to suggest that all serial murderers kill animals as children. Since this link has not been extensively studied by academicians, it may be an important area of concern. Detection of a possible link in childhood characteristics of serial murderers could prove to be beneficial to law enforcement officials. Therefore, it is suggested that future research be conducted in this area.

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APPENDIX A

TYPOLOGIES OF SERIAL MURDER

Theorist

Holmes (1983)

Schreiber (1984)

Dietz (1986)

Asphyxiators

Holmes & DeBurger (1988)

Fox & Levin (1999)

Typologies

Mysoped

Psychotic Killers

Psychopathic
Crime Spree Killers
Functionaries of Organized Crime
Custodial poisoners and

"Supposed" Psychotics

Visionary

- (1) god-mandated
- (2) demon-mandated

Mission-Oriented

Hedonistic

- (1) Thrill Seekers
- (2) Creature Comforts
- (3) Lust Murderers

Power/Control Oriented

Thrill-Motivated

- (1) Dominance
- (2) Sexual Sadism

Mission-Oriented

- (1) Reformist
- (2) Visionary

Expedience-Motivated

- (1) Protection-Oriented
- (2) Profit-Oriented